

## NEXT BIG THING

Story and photos by  
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When ground was broken on Sept. 16, the Grafenwöhr community came one step closer to having the largest Army shopping center in Europe.

The Grafenwöhr Shopping Complex's construction is being managed by the Europe District, making a joint venture between the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Europe and the Defense Commissary Agency Europe become a reality.

AAFES and DeCA have joined so they will be able to readily serve the Soldiers, civilians, retirees and family members that will be located in the area.

This facility will be "bigger and better in every way," said Michael Dowling, director of the Defense Commissary Agency Europe. This addition will triple the operation that is currently seen.

Jack Morris, senior vice president of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Europe added, "We'll all look forward to watching the mall ... take shape."

The new Post Exchange will be 40 percent larger than the Würzburg store, which was formerly the largest in Europe.

The sheer size of this facility will make it stand alone. It is also the first joint DeCA-AAFES

initiative to be certified gold with the Sustainable Project Rating Tool, or "SPiRiT," for ecological design, operation, and refurbishment of buildings and infrastructure.

"The SPiRiT program provides guidelines ... in preserving our environment and improving facility life-cycle management through the application of sound energy and environmental conservation principles," said Col. Margaret Burcham, commander of the Europe District.

Environmentally responsible practices were integrated into the project design at its conception. Using the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, as the design agent, DeCA and AAFES established sustainable design objectives at project definition and assured that these objectives were met.

This is also the first time a DeCA facility has attained a gold rating, which was achieved by establishing goals and objectives for environmentally friendly design early on in the planning stages, and, in turn, strictly adhering to these goals throughout the design of the project.

While the SPiRiT program offers the facility the chance to be ecologically friendly, the facility will also aid the quality of life to those who serve this community.

### Grafenwöhr Shopping Complex





- ◀ A sheepfoot roller is used to compact fill material mixed with cement in the area of the future commissary to bring the area up to the correct elevation before placing a layer of crushed rock and then the concrete floor slab.

Patrons will also be able to enjoy their favorite concessions on the installation as part of the 190,000-square-foot complex, complete with fast-food favorites, 11 other concessions, and the expanded commissary.

This facility is set to open in the spring of 2007, and is one of the many projects falling under the Efficient Basing – Grafenwöhr program, which is expanding the area to accommodate a brigade combat team.

As Grafenwöhr continues to grow and become one of the largest military communities in Europe, it will set the standard for service members, Department of Defense civilians and their families overseas, said Col. Brian Boyle, 100th Area Support Group commander. And this facility is just one of the amenities that will make it that way.

“The new facility will be another piece in the Efficient Basing– Grafenwöhr puzzle and a big step forward in preparing our community for the arrival of 3,500 additional Soldiers and their 5,000 family members, who are scheduled to be here by the end of 2008,” Boyle said.

Matt Mennona, AAFES general manager for Grafenwöhr, Vilseck and Hohenfels, also spoke of future customers.

“Today as we turn dirt and move into the 21st century. Our patrons will be able to enjoy the state-of-the-art facility that they so richly deserve,” Mennona said. “Keep watching. I can’t wait to see the concrete being poured.”

The Europe District awarded a \$34,804,000 contract to create such a facility.

The German construction agent in Grafenwöhr will administer and manage the project. Technical support will come from AAFES headquarters in Dallas, Texas; the DeCA design-and-construction division at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas; and the European offices both in Germany, at Mainz-Kastell and Kapaun Air Base, respectively.

▶ The main construction tower crane sits in the center of the area where the commissary will be built. Two machines are used to drill and install foundation piles for both the PX and the commissary.

Editor’s Note: Kathy Jordan is on the Training Times staff, USAG Grafenwöhr. Andrew Stamer contributed to this article.

